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with our guide to
walking off that turkey

onpage 25



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December 28, 2014

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Campaigners join forces for justice march

BY NICK SMITH

nick.smith@lutononsunday.co.uk

PRESSURE groups are to come together to show a 'united front' demanding justice for two alleged victims next month.

The organisers of Justice 4 Leon, the Faruk Ali Justice Campaign, with the possibility of leaders of other campaigns, will join forces for the march with the aim of getting their collective voices heard.

Atiq Malik, lawyer for Faruk, hopes to put pressure on Bedfordshire Police to release the recordings from an incident involving Mr Ali and two police officers who were cleared of racially aggravated assault earlier this month - to the outrage of many.

Mr Malik said: "We are calling for the shocking audio and video which was used as evidence in court to be released.

"It shocked me so much when I first saw it, I think it should be out there for people to see.

"The police are public servants and members of the public have a right to see it."

Dhobir Ali, 31, brother of Faruk,

said: "We're doing this to try to get our voices heard about what we want clearly.

"We are hoping people will come out to march in big numbers and we've had a lot of people showing interest.

"It's all about working together to help us get our voices heard."

Justice 4 Leon are also at the forefront of the march's organisation.

They are seeking justice for Leon Briggs who died in police custody last year.

Liberty Louise, spokeswoman for the campaign group, said: "We are coming together for the march as all the groups have one thing in common, that the current system doesn't work for us.

"We need to come together and show a united front.

"We are not happy with the outcome of the Faruk Ali case and we are not happy with the time being taken with the investigation into Leon's death.

"We feel there is a big issue with the disparity between justice for

civilians and police officers and we want these issues to be addressed.

"We are also looking at the possibility of starting a group to help people in similar situations across Luton in the future."

The march is scheduled to take place on Sunday, January 11 with times and the route expected to be confirmed in the coming days.

A Bedfordshire Police spokesman said: "We will have a responsibility to facilitate any peaceful protest and to make sure that we fulfil our duty of care for public safety.

"We will of course speak with the organisers and other relevant partners to appropriately plan and prepare for a demonstration of this size and nature."

He added: "As the officers in question are currently part of a disciplinary process it would be inappropriate to comment further."

For
updates
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Miracle girl back where she belongs

A GIRL who survived four heart attacks and spent months in hospital has had her first Christmas at home following her illness.

Ava Mear, five, from Caddington, fell ill on January 12 this year and underwent treatment at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), Luton & Dunstable Hospital and The Children's Trust in Surrey.

She finally returned to school in September and is now on the mend. Her father Clive said it had been a 'tough year' for the family but that having Ava back home was a 'dream come true'.

He added that a fund set up to raise £80,000 for the machine that treated Ava at GOSH had now reached £56,000 and was still going up.

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Council tight-lipped over legal bid costs

BY CARL MUNGABI
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LUTON council has said legal costs for its failed challenge of a neighbouring authority's housing plans are 'not yet available'.

The council has opposed Central Bedfordshire Council's decision to give outline approval to a developer's plan to build 5,150 homes and more than 200,000 sq metres of retail and industrial space across green belt land north of Houghton Regis.

During a High Court hearing last week which lasted two and half days, Mr Justice Holgate rejected all ten grounds of Luton's challenge, branding four of them as 'wholly unarguable'.

Luton council employed a QC and a junior barrister for the case.

The authority said it would release its costs for the case as soon as they are available.

The council had claimed that Central Bedfordshire had failed to co-operate with it as required by statute, and that the scheme's provision of affordable housing, at 10 per cent, was not enough.

However, Mr Justice Holgate said: "It is most unfortunate that this project, which will deliver much needed development and nationally important infrastructure, has been delayed by a challenge lacking in legal merit."

He also refused Luton council permission to appeal the decision, but the authority has announced its intention to take the case to the Court of Appeal.

Cllr Nigel Young, Central Bedfordshire, said: "We were particularly pleased that the judge recognised that the project

will deliver much needed development and nationally important infrastructure."

Cllr Sian Timoney, Luton's deputy leader, said: "The fundamental issue at stake is the duty of a neighbouring authority to cooperate in the preparation of a strategy to address Luton's very significant projected unmet housing need over the next 15-20 years, and support the borough's identified key role in the sub regional economy."

"Luton Council is extremely disappointed with the judgement of the High Court and therefore intends to ask the Court of Appeal to re-examine the case as the issues involved are so serious and many of our concerns seem to be shared by the Planning Inspector dealing with Central Bedfordshire's Development Strategy."

Keech patient makes television appearance

A THREE-YEAR-OLD boy who has been cared for by Keech Hospice has appeared on a national TV channel's Christmas appeal.

Stone Zsentko, three, and his family, appeared on ITV's Text Santa appeal, featuring in a short film for Together for Short Lives, one of the six Text Santa charities.

The film showcased how hospices like Keech supports families and how money raised for Together for Short Lives will help support the UK's 53 children's hospices.

Stone's story told how he contracted meningitis before his first birthday. He suffered a severe seizure and was rushed to hospital where his heart stopped for 17 minutes.

During this period Stone experienced a lack of oxygen to the brain which left him severely brain damaged, and his mother Lisa was told he had days to live. However, she took him to Keech and he has now survived for over a year.

■ You can donate £5 to the appeal by texting SANTA5 to 70760 or donate £10 by texting SANTA10 to 70760.



TEXT: Lisa said nurses at Keech have been 'amazing' in their care for Stone

newsbriefs

PIRTON TRIALS BRAND NEW SPORT

A PRIMARY school is among the first in the country to adopt an inclusive new sport.

Invented by former Luton Town player Kevin Gallen and former Hatters coach Tony McCool, Fiitball is described as a hybrid of football, netball, basketball and American football.

It is designed to prevent more gifted sportspeople from dominating the game by themselves and can be played by anyone, of any ability - including pupils at Pirton Primary School.

PIZZA DELIVERY MAN ROBBED

A DELIVERY driver was robbed by eight youths last weekend.

The driver, who is in his 20s, had just finished delivering pizzas at 5.40pm last Saturday when he was attacked by the group.

They threatened him and demanded his money, which he handed over.

He then got into his car but they then demanded his phone and broke his window.

However, he managed to drive off and call the police.

The youths have been described as around 13 or 14 years of age.

Anyone with information relating to this incident can contact DC Rachel Lydon, in confidence, at Bedfordshire Police on 101.

SCIENCE AWARD FOR SIX SCHOOLS

SIX schools have been awarded a nationally recognised award for excellence in science.

The schools were awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark after the undertook a year-long programme with set goals to achieve, which included planning experiments.

The science coordinators from Denbigh Primary, Pirton Hill Primary, Sundon Park Junior, The Meads Primary, Downside Primary and William Austin Infant were recently presented with the award by Simon Mayo, the well known radio presenter and author of three science adventure books for children, at the Royal Institution in London.

This brings the total number of Luton schools to have achieved the award to eight, with a further six working towards achieving it later in the school year.

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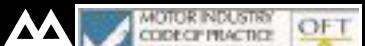
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Make a day of it!

THERE are many great things to celebrate about our wonderful county but as yet there is no such occasion dedicated to doing it.

One group, the Friends of Bedfordshire Society, are planning to change all that by lobbying for the county of Bedfordshire to have its very own day.

Earlier this year the flag of Bedfordshire was officially added to the flag institute's register and now the society hopes it can create a day on which it can be flown with pride.

Until February 28 you can vote for which date you think deserves the title with some of the top contenders being June 20 (the day in 1224 of the great siege of Bedford Castle began) November 28 (the date of John Bunyan's birth in 1628) and August 26 (the foundation of Bedford Bridge).

Luke Blackstaffe from the society said: "Bedfordshire day isn't just a day for flying a flag, it should hopefully become a day of celebration of the county and all that is good about it. It should be a day that helps promote the county and the pride people have in it.

"We would encourage everyone to vote. It doesn't take long."

To cast your vote, visit: <http://friends-of-bedfordshire.org.uk/day.php>

Bedfordshire's coolest residents:



TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL: Our candidates include Monty Panesar, Elizabeth Price and Alastair Cook

A very exclusive club of coolness

WHAT is cool? This became a hot topic of debate as we went about compiling our list of the 19 coolest Bedfordians (right now).

It turns out being cool is quite a complicated affair.

If you think you are cool, you are almost certainly not. And if you don't think you are - well, you may be right - or you could in fact be incredibly cool.

Our list features everyone from incredible achievers in sport, music and art to those you can always rely on to say it how it is, or help a friend in need.

All of them are Bedfordshire born, bred or based and we think they all deserve their place in LoS' cool Hall of Fame.

The list is not in any particular order - though we couldn't help but place Luton's very own Turner-prize winner in the top spot.

■ What do you make of our list? Have we made a seriously un-cool oversight? Send us your entries and we'll update the list online.

1. Elizabeth Price – Won the Turner Prize in 2012 and said in her acceptance speech: "It's incredibly depressing listening to comments made earlier that a young girl from Luton going to a comprehensive might not be able to imagine being an artist and might not have the opportunities I've had". Well said.

2. Alex Chinneck – the artist who made Covent Garden float and created the illusion that the facade of a house slipped off in Margate.

3. John Oliver – Went to Mark Rutherford and took over from Jon Stewart on the Daily Show last summer which is America's best known political satire programme. Then HBO gave him his own chat show. Boom.

4. Sarfraz Manzoor – One reporter's mum said 'oh he's lovely'. And, indeed, he is. This

To view the full list, go to our website, luton-dunstable.co.uk

Lutonian is a media commentator with a cool hair-do who appears in the Guardian and Culture Show.

5. Alastair Cook – England Cricket Test Captain and scorer of more than 8,000 test runs at 30 years old. He was also born on Christmas Day. We'll ignore recent form.

6. Iva Barr – completed her 18th London Marathon this year, aged 86. She also carried the Olympic torch for Bedfordshire back in 2012 – and ran all the way.

7. Monty Panesar – Once urinated on a bouncer which could be seen as sweet revenge for all mistreated punters. His popularity has never waned.

8. Matt Berry – This Bromham-born funnyman was nominated for six, count them, six British Comedy Awards this year and he bagged Best New Comedy with Toast.

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'Unfair tax' hitting 900 town families

BY CARL MUNGABI

carl.mungabi@lutononsunday.co.uk

MORE than 900 residents in Luton have had their housing benefit reduced as a result of the government's Welfare Reform, new figures have revealed.

Figures obtained by this newspaper from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) showed that 913 people had seen a fall in their benefits because of the government's controversial 'spare room subsidy' policy, dubbed the 'bedroom tax' by the Labour party.

Last week, the opposition

failed in a bid to have the policy scrapped during a vote in parliament. Luton South's Labour MP Gavin Shuker said it caused problems for residents who could not find a smaller house to live in.

He added: "Labour have been really, really clear that if we get elected in May we will get rid of this unfair tax because there are many people who are being affected by it."

Luton council said it had 're-housed 73 council tenants who were under-occupying their home' since the introduction of the policy in April last year.

It currently has 85 tenants

waiting to move into smaller accommodation.

A DWP spokeswoman said the policy saved taxpayers more than £1 million a day and that it was introduced to 'get the soaring housing benefit bill under control, return fairness to the system and make better use of social housing stock'.

She added: "We have given Luton more than £1m extra funding over two years to support vulnerable people that may need extra help and there has been an 18 per cent fall in the number of people in Luton affected by the policy since it came into force, as tenants take action."



PROBLEM SOLVER:
Stephan Eveson, 25,
with his 'GapFill'

Stephan has designs on filling the gap in your life

EVER narrowly avoided a crash because you were grappling around for an item which had fallen down the gap between the two front car seats?

Well, Luton entrepreneur Stephan

Eveson is selling the GapFill, a new product he says will solve that problem.

The 25-year-old, who once owned a basketball website and is launching a range of wooden watches next year,

said he got his latest idea after noticing it was available elsewhere in the world but not Europe.

He said: "I was looking around for ideas that were easy to do and not in the UK yet and I stumbled upon something similar which was in China.

"It was mainly being made for the high-end market but I wanted to make something which was available for any car."



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Flashing must be 'taken seriously'

BY KATHRYN CAIN
editor@lsmmedia.co.uk

VICTIMS of indecent exposure can be just as affected as people who are burgled, according to a charity.

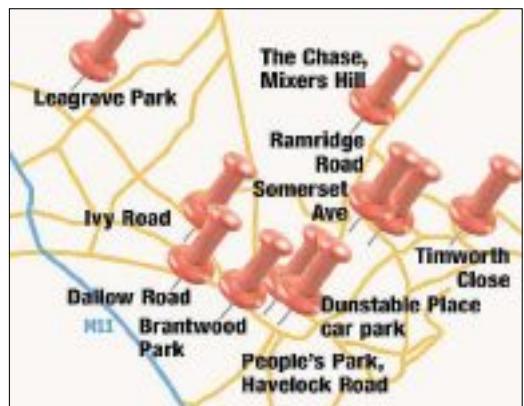
However last week when *Luton on Sunday* asked if indecent exposure was a concern for Bedfordshire Police, a spokesman questioned why this newspaper thought the public needed to know about when and where this type of incident takes place.

According to Victim Support Bedfordshire though, any services working with victims should be looking at the impact it has rather than just the crime.

Division manager for Beds and Cambs at Victim Support, David Padgett said: "The nature of the offence is almost irrelevant, the important thing is how it impacts on the victim."

"Someone who is a victim of an indecent exposure is just as affected as someone who has been burgled, you can't predict what people are going to be like."

"The range of responses is enormous, someone could be



EXPOSING THE TRUTH: Across Bedfordshire there have been at least 20 incidents of indecent exposure during the last year

outraged or just cross about it or someone could be so affected they become frightened of going outside and don't feel safe and will be so traumatised they shut themselves away.

"Some people may think it's extreme, it's only indecent exposure, but it is a criminal offence and it should be treated as seriously as any other."

This year there have been at least 20 incidents in which offenders have indecently exposed themselves to other people across the county, 10 of which occurred in Luton.

A statement made by the force said: "We do take these incidents extremely seriously and are appealing for anyone with any information to contact police on 101."

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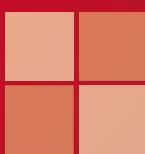
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15/01/2015

14/02/2015

10/01/2015

10/01/2015

13/01/2015

15/01/2015

15/01/2015

20/01/2015

23/01/2015

21/01/2015

21/01/2015

TIME

8-9:30pm

7:15-8:15pm

8:15-9:15pm

1pm-2pm

9:30-10:30am

9:30-10:30am

9:30-10:30am

7pm-8pm

7:45-8:45pm

10-11am

8-9am

10-11am

1:15-2:15pm

12:30-1:30pm

10:30-11:30am

8-9pm

12:15-1pm

8-9pm

5:30-6:15pm

PRICE

£40/£5*

£45/£5*

£45/£5*

£40

£1

£1

£1

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£10

£40/£5*

£40/£5*

£40/£5*

£30/£4*

Bogus booze seized from stores' shelves

BY NICK SMITH

nick.smith@lutononsunday.co.uk

POISONOUS vodka which was capable of killing or blinding drinkers has been confiscated from three shops.

Trading Standards officers removed the Glen's and Kommissar branded spirit from shelves in Luton after noticing the label described the substance as 'bottled' rather than 'bottled'.

They then discovered the Kommissar products had fake duty paid labels.

The bogus bottles had extremely high levels of isopropanol, commonly used as an industrial solvent, and butanol which is used in paint remover.

Cllr Aslam Khan, portfolio holder for public

health, said: "It is very worrying to find these dangerous products on sale locally, particularly in the run up to Christmas."

"Drinking these chemicals could cause serious illness or even death in extreme cases."

"Many unsuspecting consumers may think they are buying cheap duty free alcohol, when they are actually buying fake and dangerous products."

Investigations are ongoing into the source of the fake vodka, but it is believed it came from a 'white van man'.

Any trader found selling illicit bottles of alcohol and placing the public in danger risks having their licence taken away.

If you think you have been sold fake alcohol, call the consumer helpline on 03454 040506.

Police thank march helpers

A CEREMONY has been held to thank those who assisted Bedfordshire Police during the English Defence League march last month.

A number of representatives

from local groups and communities

were present at the ceremony

on Wednesday, December 17.

All those invited were presented

with certificates thanking them for

their help with community relations

during the event and the

day itself.

"It was an excellent example of the strong relationships we have built up with the diverse communities in the town and we wanted to formally thank those involved."



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**Sam -
Dispatcher**

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yourletters

High house prices? No thanks

A FEW weeks ago your paper carried an article talking about how Luton was a magnet for people working in London who wanted a cheaper place to live and commute from.

It got me thinking - is that all we're good for? People running away from the hyper-inflated London housing market?

I should hope not. I don't blame people for seeking out cheaper places to live, I would most likely do the same if I could not afford

to live in the capital. However, I am worried that our attraction as a commuter town could have the unwanted effect of making parts of Luton too pricey for Lutonians.

Imagine what would happen if our house prices soared?

We could end up creating a new wave of people running away from the 'crazy' house prices of Luton.

These people would head north in search for cheaper houses and soon it

would descend into a vicious cycle of people moving further north looking for such housing.

But what happens if we then run out of 'north' to move to? Do we colonise the sea as other countries have done?

No. I like dry land. And I also like decent house prices. In fact, I like many things, but expensive Luton house prices is definitely not one of them.

Frank Dignot
Luton (and proud)

I want to vote British

WHEN people vote in a general election, they don't say to themselves: right, I will vote for the party that's best for the country. No.

They vote for the party that's best for their needs. Democracy is based on people's selfish wants. That's why I cannot vote Labour or Tory.

These parties are just not British enough for my needs.

I am British. I live in Great Britain. Say no more.

John Tucker
Bracklesham Gardens
Luton

You are missing the point

IN response to Mr 'all religion is a mental illness' from last week, why should Muslims take to the street to protest what's happening in the Middle East?

You've totally missed the point of the 'Not In My Name' campaign which you were so quick to rubbish.

The whole purpose of the campaign is to denounce these actions and that to stress that these people are not viewed as Muslims by those taking part.

Whenever someone commits an atrocity in the name of any other religion, I've never seen a call for an entire religious group to take to the streets to condemn it. Why should it be different for Muslims?

Barry Grout
Luton

that were charmed by it. Please don't make this gimmick a festive staple.

Whatever next? Shall we pray in the aisles of Sainsbury's and Tesco while taking them up on buy one get one free offers? If my fellow residents really do have a thing for standing around worshipping at the wheels of a HGV then why not pop out to see the binmen who will be collecting our post-Christmas rubbish and recycling in the cold, while many of us are on holiday from work, and give them your thanks.

Or will the absence of a freebie be enough to put everyone off?

Mavis M Green
Luton

The spirit of Christmas

I THINK Luton on Sunday, along with the hundreds of people who flocked to see it last Friday, were sucked in by the visit of the Coca-Cola truck.

You previewed its visit, along with its arrival, but I just don't understand why a red lorry giving away free cans of tooth-decaying fizzy drinks is news.

Coca-Cola is a massive, global company and this tour of the branded lorry is nothing but mass advertising and free publicity.

To make it worse, Coca-Cola has hijacked Christmas with its 'holidays are coming advert' so had the touring truck play festive music to make it seem like a festive treat.

I have never felt less Christmassy than seeing this advertisement on wheels. The commercialisation of this time of year turns my stomach so bah-humbug to all of you



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RESPECT: The vigil was a show of support for the victims

Shining a light on the victims

AROUND 80 people attended a vigil held for the victims of the massacre in Peshawar, Pakistan.

The event was organised by the UK branch of the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) party last Sunday afternoon outside the Town Hall.

Mohammad Javed, a university student from the PAT, said the night had been 'very emotional' for all those who were in attendance.

£16k to help centre get 'out of the red'

BY CARL MUNGAZI

carl.mungazi@lutononsunday.co.uk

MORE than £16,000 has been raised for an in-debt centre which supports deaf people across the county.

The Alban Neve Deaf Association (ANDA), in Old Bedford Road, held a fund-raising event last Saturday to raise £15,000 to pay off a rent debt on its premises, but managed to bring in £16,356.

Ruth Wooster, a volunteer manager at the centre, said

the organisation was 'not out the woods yet' as they now needed donations for their daily operations. However, she said the fundraiser had been 'a brilliant one with the community joining in together for support'.

The charity has been trying to generate revenue from other source since losing its council funding in 2010.

The event was attended by local solicitors Atiq Malik and Lisa Bose, and Basit Mahmood and Sadiqul

Choudhury, the High Town Conservative candidates in next year's council elections.

Mr Malik said ANDA was 'yet another example of not just unsung but silent heroes in our community who work tirelessly not just day in, day out but year in year out with no recognition or support'.

Ms Bose said: "The atmosphere was incredible and it was a real honour to be a part of the joy and relief felt by the many deaf people who were present that evening."

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announcements

view the guest books at: www.luton-dunstable.co.uk/announcements

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on sunday



Santas go on the run to boost hospice coffers

HUNDREDS of Lutonians took to Wardown Park last Sunday as part of Keech Hospice's annual Santa Run.

Two hundred and 40 people donned their Santa suits for the 5k fun run, to raise money for the charity. Runners each donated £15, or £5 for under-16s, for the costumes. This included 21 bystanders who took on the challenge in a spur of the moment decision.

After a Zumba warm up, the participants, who

were dressed in the famous red outfits and fluffy beards, completed three laps around the park. The total amount raised is expected to be announced in the coming days.

The money will be spent to help children from around Luton will life-limiting illnesses, and their families.

See our gallery!

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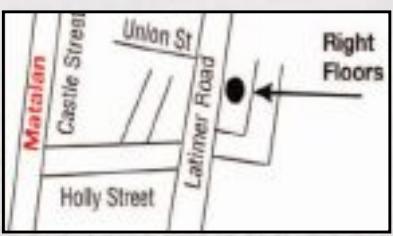
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Review of the Year...

Looking back at

JANUARY

NEW Year's honours were given to three people in Luton. They were Mabel Matthew (BEM), former Ashcroft High School pupil and celebrity trainer Greg Whyte (OBE) and University of Bedfordshire academic Jenny Pearce (OBE).

EX-EDL leader Stephen Lennon was jailed for 18-months for conspiracy to commit mortgage fraud.

MPs and senior party officials raised concerns over allegations of 'membership packing' by Labour in

LUTON on Sunday has taken a look at the stories which made the headlines in the first half of 2014. Read next week's edition for news from the second half of the year

council wards in Luton.

FEBRUARY

TWO Bedfordshire Police officers were put on restricted duties following an allegation that they had assaulted an autistic man.

A GRANDFATHER who set



READY, SET, COOK: Shazia Saleem launched her ready-made meals

fire to a house where he knew his own granddaughter was asleep was jailed for 10 years.

LUTON & Dunstable Hospital celebrated its 75th anniversary following its opening in the late 1930s.

MARCH

BARNFIELD College was given less than a month to address 'significant' concerns over leadership and financial management raised by a government inquiry into the college.

A MUSIC video featuring Luton residents dancing along to the Pharrell Williams song Happy went 'viral' after receiving thousands of views on YouTube.

LUTON businesswoman

Don't let
thieves spoil
your Christmas!

Remember there are more
burglaries about at this time of
year than other. To protect your
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...Part 1

2014's headlines



CHAMPIONS: The Hatters returned to the Football League this year

Shazia Saleem launched her own range of British halal ready-made meals.

APRIL

AIRLINE easyJet announced a 10-year deal with Luton Airport which could create up to 2,500 jobs.

AN ex-Luton serviceman who served in Afghanistan was able to walk again after having an innovative operation done in Australia.

Luton Town were promoted to League 2 after winning



ROAD RESCUE: Rev Mike Jones

the Conference League title in impressive style.

MAY

PLANS to expand passenger capacity at Luton Airport were given the go-ahead.

TWO men received plaudits for the part they played in rescuing Rev Mike Jones who had been pinned under a car following a collision.

JUNE

AN investigation was launched after two babies in

Luton were among 21 nationwide who suffered blood poisoning caused by suspected contaminated baby feed.

A MAKE-UP artist from Luton, who has worked with celebrities such as Mylene Klass, was chosen to work on a book for Prince George.

CAR manufacturer Vauxhall launched its next generation Vivaro van. The vehicle will be built in Luton over the next 10 years and will secure 1,200 jobs at the plant in Kimpton Road.

ADVERTISE

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Tom Bliss feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Luton, Dunstable and Stevenage areas and Tom is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success.

tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Luton, Dunstable and Stevenage areas and Tom is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success.

show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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EU speeches do not reflect grim reality

AS a member of the European Scrutiny Committee, a couple of weeks ago I went with its chairman Sir Bill Cash MP to a meeting in Rome.

We were representing parliament at a meeting of an organisation called COSAC, together with a couple of hundred representatives of the other EU parliaments.

We were subjected to a number of lengthy speeches by senior EU figures, including Italian Prime Minister Renzi.

His confident, optimistic speech seemed remote from what was happening outside the beautiful Italian Senate chamber where we were meeting.

There was no mention of the mass unemployment of young people right across southern Europe, no mention of the Italian general strike taking place the same week and no mention of the growing crisis in Greece.

But Mr Renzi was outdone by another even smoother, even more optimistic speech from European Commission Vice President Timmermans.

He spoke of the bright future for the youth of the EU, a stunning statement which completely ignored the fact that more than half of young



IN this week's column, MP Kelvin Hopkins reflects on an EU meeting he recently attended

people under 25 in Spain and Greece and millions more elsewhere had no jobs and no hope of a job for the foreseeable future. What was even more astonishing is that virtually all the delegates from across the EU sat quietly and made no protest against such nonsense.

That is to say, except the British of course, with both Sir Bill and myself later putting in our sixpenny worth.

As a senior representative, Sir Bill was permitted to make a longer formal speech from the front of the Conference, very critical of the EU but from a Conservative angle.

For my part, from the left, in my second permitted one minute speech, I asked why there had been no mention in our two-day conference of mass unemployment, of the falling living standards working people, of inequality, of poverty and the failure of the Eurozone economy.

I am told my speech was received in silence, perhaps a stunned silence, for raising

the real issues about which almost no-one seemed to wish to speak.

It occurred to me that the delegates were either all signed up to the nonsense of the Eurozone and the ravages it has wrought on the lives of millions of ordinary people in the EU, or they were nervous of speaking up for fear of party political retribution when they returned home.

It is certainly the case that in proportional representation electoral systems, commonplace in continental Europe, where electors vote for lists of candidates, only those at the top of the list get elected.

It is easy therefore for party leaders to put dissenting members lower down on party lists and get rid of them at following elections. That is one reason why I so strongly support Britain's first past the post system.

Whatever the reason for the silence of EU Parliamentary lambs, there is clearly something wrong with EU politics.

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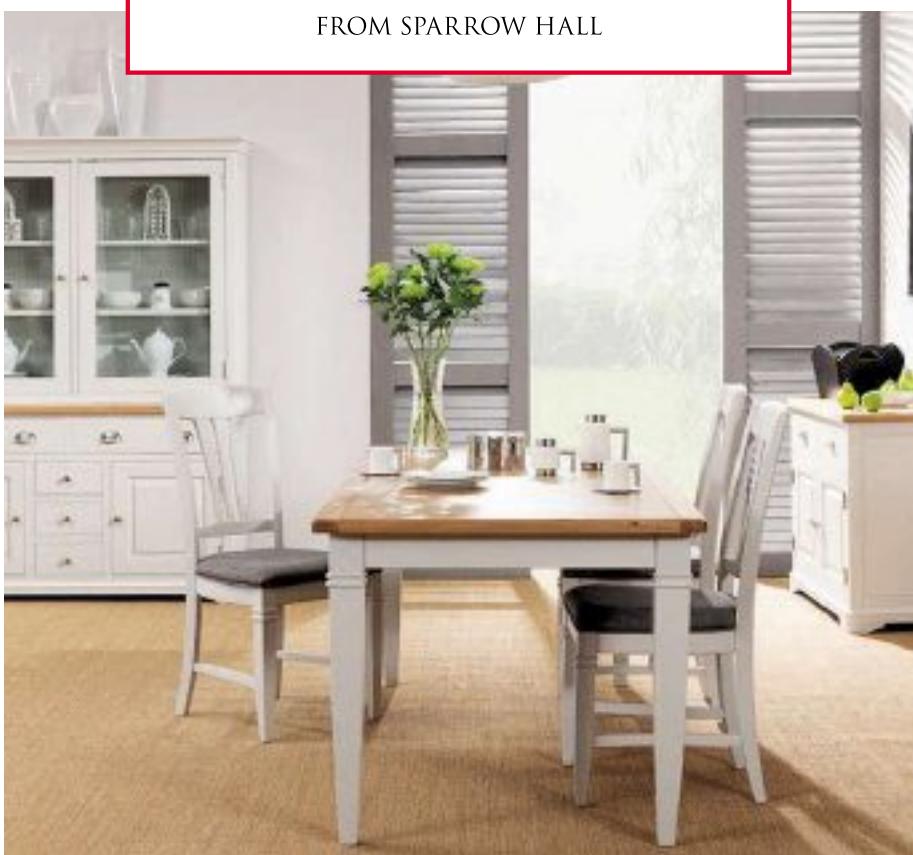
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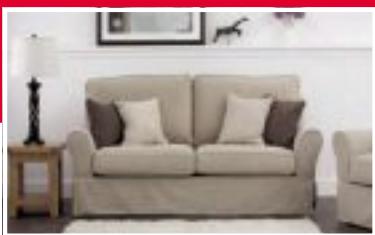


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We all create more waste over the holiday period. Glass, cans, Christmas trees, cards, wrapping paper and plastic are all thrown away in dustbins across the country.

With a little thought though, we can all limit the impact that we have on our environment – so why not make a special effort to try and minimise the amount of waste produced over the festive period?

Reduce

- When shopping for presents, choose reusable shopping bags or reuse carrier bags
- Do not overwrap gifts: use a Christmas stocking instead of paper for smaller gifts
- Did you know around a third of all the food we buy ends up being thrown away? Try to make a shopping list and remember to check your cupboards, fridge and freezer before you go shopping. For other tips go to www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Reuse

- Cut up last year's Christmas cards to create your own unique gift tags!
- Choose a pot-grown tree, which you can replant in the garden and use again next year

Recycle

- Use your green bins for recycling any paper or cards that you dispose of over Christmas and the new year (not suitable for wrapping paper and cards that contain glitter or foil)
- A whole range of jars from cranberry sauce to mincemeat and baby food can all be recycled: just give them a rinse and recycle them in your black box or take them to the nearest bottle bank
- Squash fizzy drink bottles and cardboard packaging to make extra space in your recycling, or take any excess materials to your local recycling centre.

Household refuse, recycling and glass collections Christmas and New Year 2014-2015

Please have your bins and boxes available from 6am on day of collection

Normal collection day:	Black bin for general waste	Green recycling bin	Glass collection box
Mon 22 Dec	Will be collected on:	Will be collected on:	Will be collected on:
Tue 23 Dec	No change	No change	No change
Wed 24 Dec	No change	No change	No change
Thurs 25 Dec	Fri 2 Jan	Sat 27 Dec	Sat 27 Dec
Fri 26 Dec	Sat 3 Jan	Sat 27 Dec	Sat 27 Dec
Mon 29 Dec	No change	No change	No change
Tue 30 Dec	No change	No change	No change
Wed 31 Jan	No change	No change	No change
Thurs 1 Jan	Fri 2 Jan	Fri 2 Jan	Fri 2 Jan
Fri 2 Jan	Sat 3 Jan	Sat 3 Jan	Sat 3 Jan

Collections return to normal from Monday 5 January 2015
Contact 01582 51 03 33 for more information.
email: wastecustomerservice@luton.gov.uk

Garden Waste collections will be suspended from Friday 28 November 2014 (last collection) until week commencing Monday 2 March 2015.
During that time please use the Household Waste Recycling Centres or home compost your garden waste.



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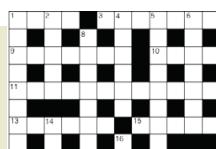
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Fee-fi-fo-fum, I can smell a pantomime!

onpage26



There's something to puzzle over...

onpage26

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WALKS

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THE snow-clad mountains, the deep valleys through which torrents of clear water rush; the ancient forests and towering glaciers, the waves crashing against the craggy cliffs. Does this neatly sum up your Bedfordshire home?

No, of course not. But that doesn't mean that we don't have some very nice places in this county to go walk-about.

North, south, east or west or, come to that, slap bang in the middle, you can be as intrepid or as restrained as you like; from the 40 mile trek that is the long distance Greensand Ridge trail in the east of the county to a gentle stroll in the north round Harrold Country Park via the village green complete with picturesque Georgian lock-up.

A walk that is planned down to the last inch can still surprise you. Unless you are a trained survivalist able to follow the week-old footprints of a Ramblers group or an Ordnance Survey cartographer, maps have a habit of leading you up the garden path. I have stumbled up many a private garden path by accident, muttering apologies to the outraged householders as I creep back through a hedge.

But mystery, magic and mud are part and parcel of a walk at this time of year.

The mystery manifests itself in the shape of public footpath signs that turn out to be pointing in what is clearly the wrong direction - even upwards on occasion.

The magic is the sight of the winter sun setting behind trees overhanging a frosty lane and the lights that twinkle invitingly in the country pub where your car is parked.

The mud is...mud. If you're going to walk across fields in the winter, there will be mud. Deal with it.

New year is the perfect time to blow the cob-

Find the full routes
links at luton-dunstable.co.uk



STEPPING OUT: Wherever you are in the county there are places to go and see on foot such as the Dunstable Downs and the ruined St Mary's Church in Clophill

webs off your walking or wellie boots and get out and about.

Full of good intentions such as eating and drinking less and exercising more, it's best to seize the day, grab the moment and employ any other suitably motivational expression that will stop you mouldering for another weekend in front of the telly with a turkey sandwich and a can of lager.

Rowney Warren sounds like something out of Watership Down or The Hobbit. Tucked away in Mid Beds, it's a part of Ampthill

Forest, a huge area of woodland where you can walk, with or without a dog, or follow mountain biking trails with an added rush of adrenalin. Striking out from the woods, pick up the Bunyan Trail, leave it where it joins the Greensand Ridge Walk and follow that route all the way to Clophill village passing the atmospheric ruins of Clophill Church.

Then nip into one of the two village pubs to revive your own spirits! For amazing views you can't beat Sharpenhoe Clappers.

Sounds like a troupe of Morris dancers, I know, but this striking ancient chalk downland, Bedfordshire's answer to Table Mountain in South Africa or Uluru in Australia, is part of the gently rolling Chiltern Hills.

Set off from Barton le Clay and you can do an exhilarating round walk of just over six miles with a pit stop at The Chequers pub in Streatley half way round.

Ok, so you're putting those New Year resolutions aside - but only for a few minutes... **JUDY RILEY**

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Let's draw on the community for our art inspiration

ART EXHIBITION

DRAWN TOGETHER

The Hat Factory
Starting March 5

A MEDIA company is looking for artistic locals to put pen to paper for an art exhibition next year.

Luton-based A Thin Place is hoping people will explore their creative side for its upcoming exhibition, called Drawn Together.

It is looking for drawings to be submitted based around the idea of community, which is perfect for Lutonians given the diversity of the town and the number of communities.

Submissions can represent the theme in any way they choose and amateurs, students who are just getting started and professional artists with their own studios can get involved.

Work will be judged by a panel of special guests, which is yet to be announced, but will include a number of established illustrators.

Prizes will be awarded for Best in Show and New Talent.

Any submissions are to be sent via email to sophie@athinplace.co.uk by February 20.

The exhibition itself will take place from March 5 to 31 at The Hat Factory in Luton.

For more information, along with terms and conditions for entry, visit <http://www.athinplace.co.uk/drawntogether>.



PANTOMIME

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Alban Arena, St Albans

Until January 4

PANTOMIME season may be drawing to a close, but there is still a chance to catch a last minute show... oh yes there is!

This year, the Alban Arena is hosting a performance of Jack and the Beanstalk.

For those unfamiliar with Jack and the Beanstalk, it is a classic English tale which has become one of the most famous pantomimes of all time.

It sees a young boy, Jack, sent to the market to sell the family cow, but

instead of returning with much-needed money, he trades the cow for magic beans.

I know, what was he thinking?

In a rage Jack's mother throws them beans out of the window, only for them to grow into a giant beanstalk that stretches into the cloud.

Of course, Jack climbs it, unaware of the danger waiting at the top.

The show is a take on the classic story, with a few twists on the much-loved fairy tale... most noticeably the inclusion of a breakdancing cow.

The performance features stunning sets, comedy, audience participation and breath-taking special effects.

The show boasts an impressive cast, with everyone's favourite TV villain Steve McFadden, better known as EastEnders' Phil Mitchell,

playing the evil Fleshcreeper. He appears alongside Rebecca Keatley of CBeebies fame.

Joining them as Dame Trott, is St Albans' favourite funny man and star of the Olivier award winning play 'Morecambe', Bob Golding.

Another local favourite, Jemma Carlisle, will also be taking to the stage.

Lastly, Andrew Bryant will be playing the starring role of hero Jack.

Jack and the Beanstalk already looks set to be the best-selling pantomime St Albans has seen.

Tickets cost from £18 to £25 with a £2.50 concessions discount.

They are limited though so act quickly to make sure you don't miss out.

Book online at alban-arena.co.uk or call 01727 844488.

Bands are set to head into a music battle

IT'S time to pick up your instruments and get practising as Grosvenor Casino plays host to Luton's Battle of the Bands next month.

Heats will be taking place on Friday, January 16 and January 23 with the grand final on January 30.

Two winners from each heat will progress.

The prize for the overall winner is £500 and two more gigs at the casino.

Bands from across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire have been invited to take part so it's chance to not only put your band on the map, but Luton as well.

Every genre is welcome, from rock to pop and folk, as long as there are more than two in your group.

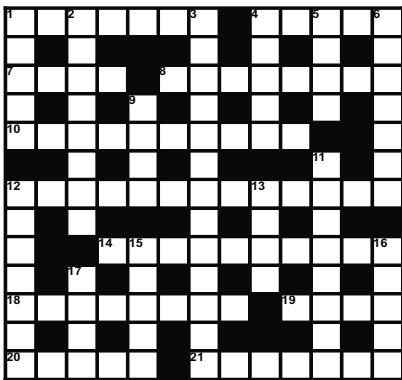
All shows take place at 9pm.

Both performers and attendees must be over 18 and ID will be required for those who aren't already casino members.

Entry to the performance is free.

For full terms and conditions or to apply for a place in the heats, call Massimo on 01582 813780.

PUZZLE CORNER



THE THINKER

ACROSS
1 Guard swindled a novice bit by bit (7)
4 Best man's holding the money (5)
7 Amazed in the past by first grandchild (4)
8 Water, alas, made a mess (5,3)
10 De-materialise in Tardis to skip customs (10)
12 Don and Ned wiggled strangely at celebration (6,7)
14 High regard for tins taken from management (10)
18 Appetiser prepared in a fire pit (8)
19 The main danger of some more effluent (4)
20 Winning cards by deception (5)
21 Halts programme in empty gallery, feeling awful (7)

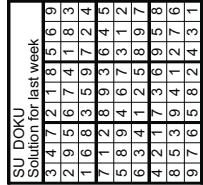
DOWN
1 It's hard work to produce new plant (5)
2 Really cute board members in the drink (8)
3 Personal servant is glad I win a tiny argument (4-2-7)
4 Locum, I noticed, carried some spice (5)
5 Retentive type starts acting normally, and laudably (4)
6 Seeking God's help, we hear, when attacking (7)
9 Rise to achieve parenthood (4)
11 Lent mini whisk to make ointment (8)
12 Impudence shown by worker when dashing (7)
13 The timber trade (4)
15 Kinder not to take drug mixed with alcohol (5)
16 Fit comfortably in New York, being stylish (5)
17 Fairy in danger up to the end (4)

SOLUTION FOR LAST WEEK
ACROSS: 1.Postbox 5.8.Roofs 9.Aladdin 10.Eiks
11.Melchior 14.Angel 15.Trees 19.Hostelry 20.Skis
22.Mirabol 24.Until 25.Super 26.Clear-up
DOWN: 1.Parcel 2.Stockings 3.Busy 4.Xmases 5.Prancers
6.Nod 7.Owners 12.Ice skater 13.December 16.Rhymes
17.Frolic 18.Asleep 21.Yule 23.Rap



Complete the grid so that all rows, columns and 3x3 boxes contain the numbers 1 to 9.
Solution next week.

Solutions

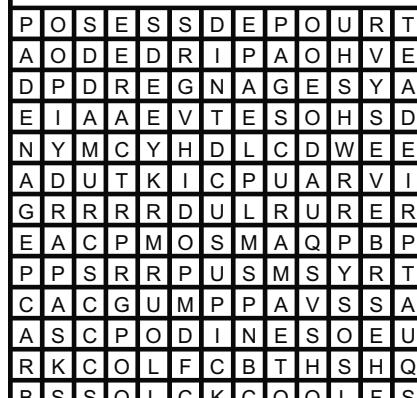


ANSWER: MATCH FIVE
SOLVE, VALET, SLAVE,
VITAL, VITAL

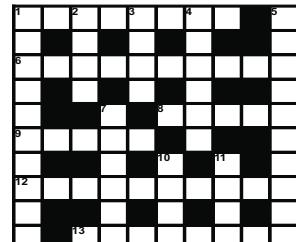
Nº	4	-	5
Fun!	+	2	÷
52	1	x	6

Use all the numbers and signs to make the star total. Do calculations in strict order from left to right with no brackets - eg 4x6-2+1=5=27
Last week: 4 + 2 + 7 - 3 x 5 = 30

FIND THE WORDS

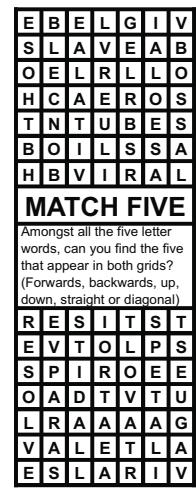


Find the words: Up, down, forwards, backwards, straight or diagonal. This week: Groups:
Pride, Troupe, Scrum, Class, Flock, Party, Swarm, Posse, Brace, Group, Host, Leap, Nide, Pack, Herd, Pod, Team, Gang, Bevy, Squad

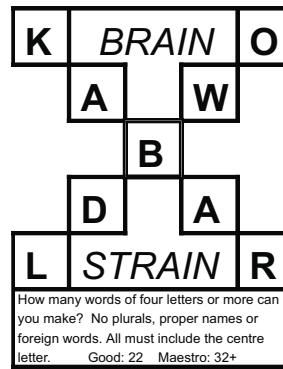


ACROSS
1.Horse show (8) DOWN
1.Estate servant (10)
6.Big city (10) 2.Spec (4)
8.Torch (5) 3.Sing (4)
9.Do well (5) 4.Park (6)
12.Mitigating (10) 5.Totally (10)
13.Meeting (8) 7.Instruments (6)
10.Aspice (4) 11.Leg or arm (4)

SOLUTION FOR LAST WEEK
ACROSS: 2.Wise men 6.Wish 7.Halo 8.Birth
9.Tee 13.Nee 16.Light 17.Lamp 18.Ilex
19.Snow
DOWN: 1.Divan 2.Whoop 3.Stable 4.Myrrh
5.Night 10.Anthem 11.Sleds 12.Iglo 14.Elfin
15.Ember



Amongst all the five letter words, can you find the five that appear in both grids? (Forwards, backwards, up, down, straight or diagonal)



How many words of four letters or more can you make? No plurals, proper names or foreign words. All must include the centre letter. Good: 22 Maestro: 32+



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- A £55 ticket for André Rieu in Maastricht - upgrades available
- The services of a tour manager

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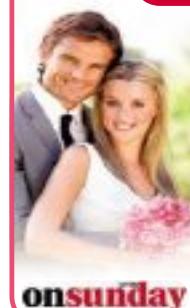


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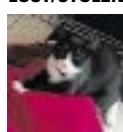
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Recovered Smith backs pal Guttridge to bounce back from his own injury woes

HATTERS

 BY JAMES CUNLIFFE
 sport@lsmmedia.co.uk

LUKE Guttridge will bounce back from his latest career-threatening injury blow and return for Luton this season – that is the view of team-mate Jonathan Smith.

Both Hatters players were forced to watch from the sidelines last term as Town stormed to the Conference title and won promotion back into the Football League.

But while Smith has been a mainstay of the side since his return from a broken leg in September, Guttridge has re-injured the foot that kept him out from March and had seen him play in under half of Town's games this term.

Hatters boss John Still admitted earlier this month that the former Northampton ace's career hangs in the balance over the problem recurrence, with hopes pinned on injections to calcify a bone which has already been operated on and a screw inserted.

Smith, however, has no such doubts, saying: "Do you know what? Luke Guttridge was the person that helped me the most when I was injured. He put me up in his house when I did my leg and I needed help."

"I've got a lot of respect for him, he's a top player, he'll be back and he'll be back this season."

Smith has formed a good central midfield partnership this term with Nathan Doyle and part of that, so says the 28-year-old, is down to the diligent work he put in while on the road to recovery.

"When I was off with the broken leg I took a lot of time to try to improve my game through watching and learning and I'm now putting that into practice," he explained.

"I didn't waste my time when I was off, I worked hard on what I could improve on."

His efforts saw him rewarded with the skipper's armband, in place of the suspended Steve


INJURY BATTLE: Luke Guttridge

Picture: Gareth Owen

McNulty, for the 1-0 FA Cup second round replay win over Bury earlier this month, which booked a third stage trip to fellow fourth tier rivals Cambridge United.

"It was a great honour to captain such a big football club and I'm proud of that," Smith said, adding: "Steve McNulty is the captain and always will be."

"He's done a magnificent job this season and is a real leader of the team, so I had to take a big job on because he does such a good job for the team."

McNulty returned to the side for last Saturday's League Two victory at home to Newport and Smith knows it was important to get back to winning ways – after the previous

weekend's 3-0 reverse at Morecambe – as the Hatters bid to remain among the League Two high fliers.

"It's very important now, and I know it's easier said than done, to concentrate on the league because we've got some massive games coming up," he said. "It's important that we push hard in the league now."

Review: Luton Town FC – The Full Record

HATTERS

 BY JAMES CUNLIFFE
 sport@lsmmedia.co.uk

THERE are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Now, whether you're on the side of 19th-century British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli or classic American author Mark Twain as to the origin of that statement, it's not a bad rule of thumb, particularly when it comes to football.

Mostly though, an increasing amount of stats are just utterly pointless, such as the news that Santi Cazorla had become the fourth Arsenal star to score on his birthday, as he banged in a brace against Newcastle. Who cares?

It is this slow Americanised drip-drip of facts and irrelevant figures that, not only has absolutely no bearing on the outcome of a match, but has insidiously crept into the beautiful game, giving actor Ray Winstone's floating head an excuse every half time to insist that television viewers

"Av a bang on that!" They need this data Stateside because their sports are long and boring affairs.

You can add your opinion to that viewpoint, of course, but until the rest of the world takes up American football – a sport so colloquial that it's prefixed by the name of one nation – or until the World Series of baseball is accurately represented with, you know, participants from around the globe, then I feel I'm on pretty safe ground.

Broadcaster Danny Baker, earlier this year, excellently surmised on Twitter: "I really hate statistics after a football match."

"They are the middle management of game enjoyment. The only proper response is 'SO WHAT!'"

I add, as exhibit A for the prosecution, football heat maps. When did that become a thing?

PLENTY OF HISTORY:
 Kenilworth Road


Thankfully, there's none of that new-fangled, irrelevant claptrap when it comes to Simon Pitts and Roger Wash's revised, new edition book – Luton Town Football Club The Full Record.

It's chock full of good, old-fashioned, reliable facts and figures – the only ones that matter about the Hatters.

That is who they played, when and where, what players were involved, who scored, how many fans turned up and, of course, the actual result.

And when the authors are a radio commentator nicknamed Statto and the club historian you can expect it to be a pretty damn comprehensive look back at those important numbers from Luton's chequered history.

That's 5,210 first team competitive games, 1,218 players, FA Cup and Littlewoods Cup finals, European clashes against Serie A giants, boom, bust and boom again, all right up to last term's record-breaking run to the Conference title – the last and most impressive of 108 league tables.

Prefer pictures? There are more than 40 new ones, starting with Edwardian gentlemen sporting elaborate soup strainers on their stiff upper-lips, up to 129 years before the month-long modern annoyance that is Movember.

The big, all-time top records complete 304 pages of the only Hatters statistics that did, do and will ever matter. No lies.

Wycombe v Luton: Full coverage of the Hatters' key Boxing Day outing online

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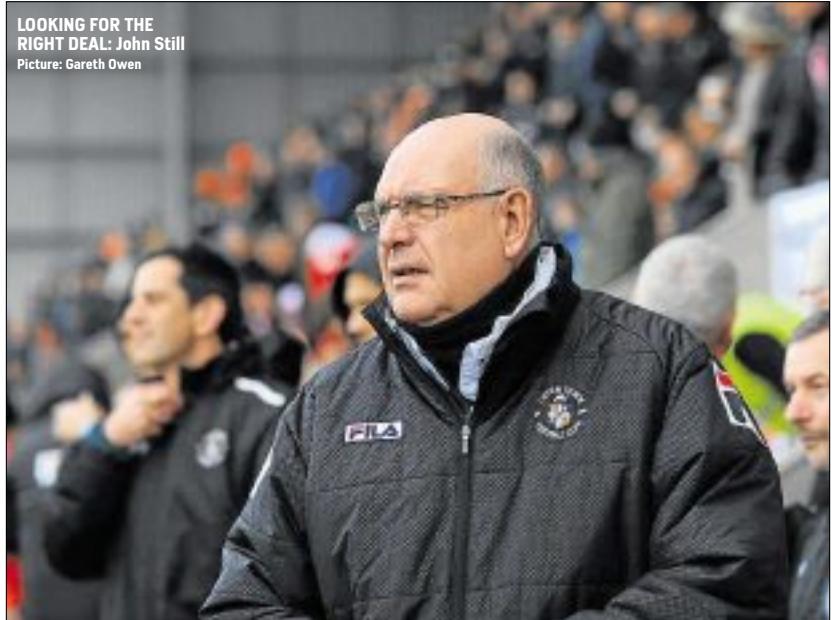
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Still's not ruling out new recruits in January sales

LOOKING FOR THE
RIGHT DEAL: John Still
Picture: Gareth Owen



HATTERS

BY CIARAN THOMAS
sport@lsnmedia.co.uk

JOHN Still says he isn't a fan of the January transfer window but didn't rule out entering the New Year sales if the right player comes along.

The Hatters' squad has suffered a number of injuries in recent weeks, especially in the attacking department, and the manager admitted that could lead him to bring in reinforcements.

However, Still isn't a man who deals with short term fixes, and said he would only bring in players if it was the right move in the long run.

"I'm not a big lover of this transfer window," he said.

"I think sometimes you can get sort of dragged into doing something that long term is not the right thing."

"So if there was some-

thing out there that we felt was right it would be with a long term tag attached.

"The injuries that we have could be a reason that we would do it, but we'll wait and see."

"If the right person became available whether it was now, six weeks ago or in six weeks' time then yes because we know that's right."

"There are players that interest us, we might have enquired about them but they're not available."

"Would they be available in January? Maybe, but even if they were available it doesn't mean we'd take them."

Luke Rooney's short term contract expires next month, and Still revealed he has held talks with the midfielder who has expressed his desire to stay and scored in the FA Cup win over Bury and in the League Two win over Newport.

He also said the signing

of defender Lewis Gibbons is close to being finalised, with the club having found the defender suitable accommodation.

The former Sunderland youngster was sacked by the Black Cats for failing a drugs test, but it was revealed last month that the 20-year-old is set to be offered a contract by the Hatters after serving a two year ban.

"We think we've got digs for him," said Still. "All it's been is we don't want him at his age to live on his own, we don't want him to live in a hotel. We need him to be in somewhere but we may have found that for him."

Another Hatters signing could be Cameron McGeehan, who impressed at Kenilworth Road on loan from Norwich City last season.

Still, however, said he would only be interested in a permanent move for the midfielder.

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